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Importations killing industry, says basket maker – 1926

RESIDENTS of Ely who visit the riverside must observe a great change in the scene as compared with a few years ago.

Then, basket makers, with a crowd of women 'peelers', would have been busy making baskets and peeling the reeds in order to cope with the summertime demands upon the industry.

But now the scene is a very different one. Only a mere handful of men and women are found employment and the industry is threatened with extinction.

This, it is stated, is due to the importation of foreign goods, which can be shipped into the home markets and sold at similar smaller cost than it actually takes to make the baskets in Ely.

Mr Oliver P. Scott, 70, has been associated with the industry ever since he was a schoolboy and told a reporter that he could trace his relatives who have been basket makers in Ely since 1710.

He is the last surviving member of his family, has about 26 acres of land which he devotes to the growing of reeds, but since the industry has become so bad he has turned six acres down to grass, which pays him better.

The peeling of the reeds cost twice as much today as it used to do. Illustrating how foreign competition was killing the trade, Mr Scott said that what were known as picking up baskets were being put on the market by people from Holland at 9d each, compared to 1s 2d which English makers were bound to charge.

Mr Scott was firm in his belief that it was nothing but foreign competition that was killing the industry, which could only be saved by a tax on the importation of foreign goods.

Basket makers in Ely

Should iconic mills be turned into lecture halls? – 1927

CAMBRIDGE councillors debated whether part of the King's and Bishop's Mill site should be sold to the university to erect new lecture rooms.

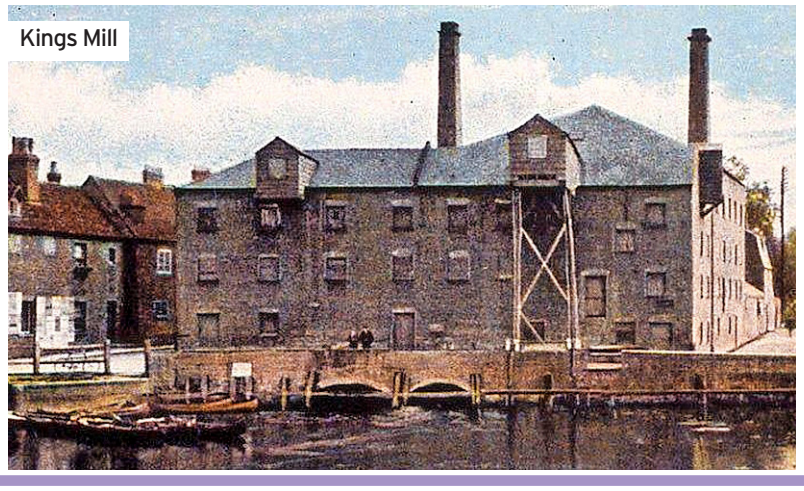
The corporation should not sell its property in this way; it should do so on the public market.

They might get a higher offer from a firm who would like to put up a Woolworth building but they wanted an appropriate end to the Backs and such improvements would give an almost Venetian effect to the whole of the Backs river.

To consider turning the site into a recreation ground with railings and white paint would be most regrettable.

They should pull down the remains of the mill so that everyone could see what the site looked like when the fag-end of the foundations was up.

It would expose some quite ugly buildings which would not be hidden by any plans before them.



Kings Mill

Armed motorist steals chocolates and cigarettes – 1925

TWO attempts were made to stop an armed motorist who broke into Daisley's shop at Coronation Street, Cambridge, and stole a quantity of chocolates, cigarettes, etc.

A car travelling at high speed was seen by a constable at Bishop's Stortford. Shortly after, PC Dodson of Harlow police station was notified of the approach of the car.

Dashing out of the police station in his pyjamas, he stood in the middle of the road and signalled the car to stop.

It continued its course and the constable had to jump very quickly out of the way.

The Marquis of Granby Hotel 'in a state of siege' – 1925

PS Newell told the court that he saw the prisoners and, becoming suspicious, enlisted the services of various well-disposed people in Littleport, and surrounded The Marquis of Granby Hotel, which was, to all intents and purposes, in a state of siege.

He invited the men to come out of their room but the reply he got was: "If you attempt to force the door, we shall shoot."

In fairness to the prisoners, it should be said that, when they were arrested, no forearms were found upon them.

In their endeavour to get away, they had drawn the bedstead up to the window and knotted the sheets with the view of lowering themselves to the ground.

Fire at ladies college – first use of smoke helmet – 1909

A FIRE broke out at the ladies training college in Wollaston Road.

Very fortunately, the vacation had denuded the college of students and only Miss Ellis, the bursar, and six domestic servants were in residence.

Hastily snatching up dressing gowns, they scurried out of the burning building by the servants' staircase at the back.

Firemen tied handkerchiefs over their mouths and nostrils and the smoke helmet was used for the first time.

Considerable damage was done but the college may find consolation in having a building remaining at all.

The Marquis of Granby Hotel in Littleport

The Ladies' Training College at Wollaston Road

Nurse dies as canoe overturns on Paradise River – 1906

A FATALITY occurred at the portion of the river known as Paradise; two nurses from Addenbrooke's Hospital hired a Canadian canoe but it overturned and they were precipitated into the water.

One clung to the boat and, with the aid of a pair of horse reins, was brought to the bank.

A man pluckily jumped into the river after the other nurse but the depth of the water – about 15 feet – made it impossible for him to reach her.

Eventually, the clothing of the unfortunate lady was hooked but she had obviously succumbed.